



LOVELAND DRY GULCH GUIDED SNOWCAT TOURS

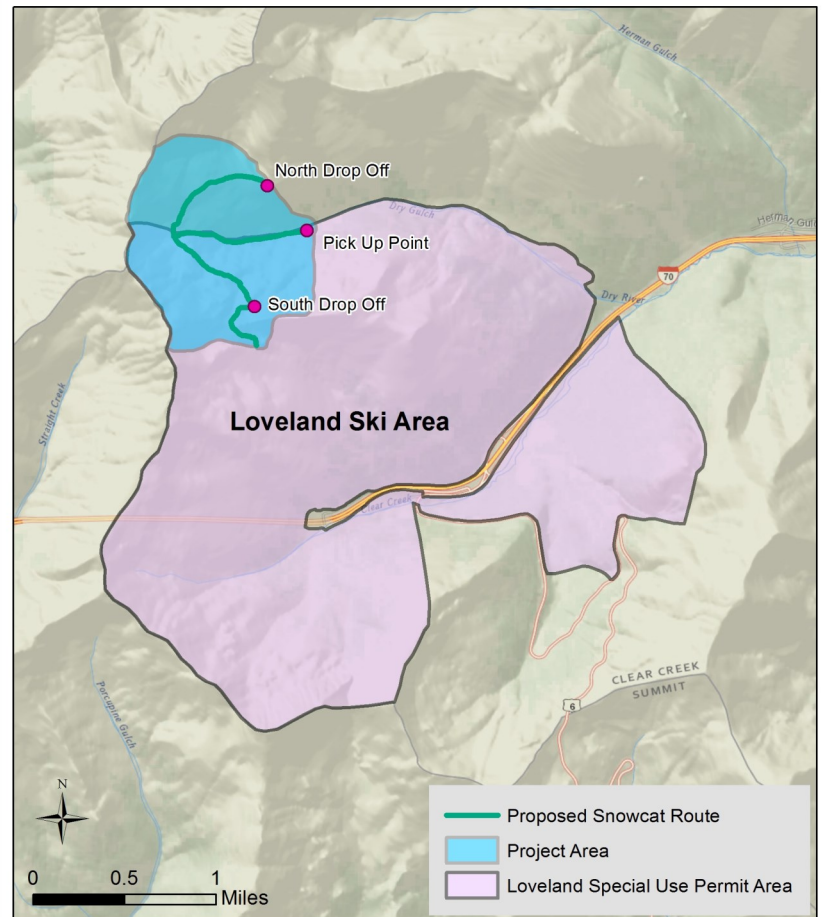
Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests

Clear Creek Ranger District

Public Scoping for Guided Snowcat Tours at Loveland Ski Area

The Forest Service is inviting public comments on proposed guided snowcat tours within and directly adjacent to the Loveland Ski Area. The Forest Service would like to determine whether this project will enhance recreation and provide further opportunities to skiers and snowboarders in the area. Furthermore, the Forest Service is looking at potential issues and benefits to resources in the project area, including wildlife, fish, and cultural.

The proposed project area is located in the upper reaches of the Dry Gulch area, which is in and around the Loveland Ski Area. The Loveland Ski Area is 53 miles west of Denver and located in the northern portion of the Arapaho National Forest, Clear Creek County, Colorado.



Proposed Action

Loveland Ski Area is requesting permission to introduce guided snowcat (over-the-snow only tracked vehicle) tours into the upper reaches of the Dry Gulch area. Tours would begin at the Lift 8 backcountry access point and head north over a saddle west of the ridge line of Mt. Trelease. Once over the saddle, the snowcat would travel along the natural drainage within Loveland's Special Use Permit (SUP) boundary.

Loveland Ski Area is looking to extend this guided snowcat experience into 210 acres that is adjacent to the northern edge, but outside of the SUP boundary through an Outfitter-Guide permit. The operation would establish three seasonal snowcat snow routes to allow the snowcat to access pick up and drop off points for customers participating in the guided tours. The ski area estimates five to seven runs per trip, with total runs of 160-224 per day. Only one snowcat would be used for these trips. Avalanche mitigation would be achieved by hand tossed charges below the mountain ridgeline.



While the purpose of this project is focused on providing additional recreational opportunities on Forest Service land, impacts to other resources are being carefully considered. Based on resource information gathered to date, the Forest Service has identified resources such as greenback cutthroat trout, Canada lynx, and potential cultural sites as possible issues to further analyze. These resources, in addition to any others identified, will be examined. Design features are being further developed to minimize or eliminate potential impacts. Comments from the public can provide important insight into other issues of concern.

Given the above information, what ideas do you have?

As the Forest Services evaluates management options for the area, you are invited to provide suggestions and any additional information of which the Forest Service may be unaware. Comments and ideas received will be considered during the development of potential management options. This is the first opportunity to provide input on the project. Environmental analyses are expected to reveal the effects of management options to assist the District Ranger and Forest Supervisor in determining the best way to manage the area.

Please provide specific and constructive comments, as the Forest Service is seeking solutions. Clear comments of this nature are most beneficial in helping us create the best project possible.

Submit comments by August 10, 2018 via one of the following options:

Email:

comments-rocky-mountain-arapaho-roosevelt-clear-creek@fs.fed.us with “Loveland Dry Gulch” in the subject line.

Mail:

Clear Creek Ranger District
Attention: Loveland Dry Gulch
PO Box 3307
Idaho Springs, CO 80452

Anticipated Timeline and Planning Process:

- Public scoping (current phase) and additional scoping as needed.
- EA available for public review (Fall 2018)
- Final Decision (Winter 2018)

Thank you for your interest in the project and management of the National Forests and Grasslands.